

The motion was agreed to, and then, on motion of Mr. Page, the committee asked to be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

The report was concurred in, and the Convention then took up the first section of the supplementary legislative report, as follows:

"No person shall be deemed incompetent as a witness on account of race or color, unless hereafter so declared by act of the General Assembly."

Mr. Peters moved to amend by providing that no person shall be deemed incompetent, &c., after the year 1967.

Mr. Peters would not have offered the amendment but that he and those who were opposed to this section had been denied the courtesies of debate. He proposed, however, not to speak of this, but to give the fundamental objections which he had to this provision. It was a mean cringing to the Yankee Congress, and the high-toned people of this State would not countenance them in the act. It was a carrying out of the infamous civil rights bill.

Mr. Nelson would not rise to address the Convention on this subject if it was not one of greatest moment to the people of Maryland. He thought he was not mistaken in saying that his constituents were opposed to negro suffrage. This question had not been submitted to the people; and although there were those who counseled that this Convention should rise superior to the people and do what was right, but whether right or not, he could not vote for the measure without instructions from his constituents, or until they have had a chance to let their sentiments be known.

He (Mr. N.) was in a minority here on this subject, and the gentleman from Somerset (Mr. Jones) charged that their opposition was founded on prejudice only, but if the fifteen minutes' rule did not shut him off he thought he would be able to convince the gentleman that this opposition was not founded on prejudice. The gentleman in his researches had gone back to 1638, and had asserted that there was no distinction on account of color in the common law of England. He granted that there was no distinction so far as a witness was concerned as to color,